

Josh & Marguerite

But if QEDS failed in the coinage of 'gene,' I note with keen satisfaction that it was its usual correct reference work in noting the coinage of 'plasmid.' To save you the effort of checking that claim, I provide this Canon-ized copy of that entry on the word-cum-concept which has entered the canon:

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plasmid (plæ-zmid). *Biol.* [f. PLASM + -id (cf. ID, *CHROMATID)]. Any genetic structure in a cell that can replicate independently of the chromosomes; esp. one in the cytoplasm of a bacterium.

1952 J. LEBERBERG in *Physiol. Rev.* XXXII. 403: I propose *plasmid* as a generic term for any extrachromosomal hereditary determinant. *Ibid.* The taxonomic classification of plasmids as viruses, symbionts, or plasmagones should not obscure careful descriptions of their function, hereditary or pathological, or both. *Ibid.* 414, κ, a plasmid in *Paramecium aurelia*. *Ibid.* 425 This review has contrasted the various forms of plasmid; the hereditary parasites as against the functionally coordinated plasmagones, with the mutualistic endosymbionts somewhere between. 1964 *Daily Mirror* 24 July 8/2 The Rogue Bug's real name is RTF plasmid—R.T.F. stands for Resistance Transfer Factor. It is a tiny particle that appears to move from one bacterial cell to another, carrying with it a built-in resistance to new drugs. 1969 A. M. CAMERON in *Episomes* 1. 13 Episomes are thus distinguished from chromosomal genes on the one hand and obligately cytoplasmic elements (plasmids) on the other. 1973 R. G. KAUZMAN et al. *Intrad. Microbiol.* xv. 421/2 There are transmissible plasmids or sex factors like the F factor, which promote their own transfer to recipient bacteria, and there are nontransmissible plasmids which are incapable of transferring themselves to recipient cells. 1975 *Sci. Amer.* July 23 It has been called plasmid engineering, because it utilizes plasmids to introduce the foreign genes... Because of the method's potential for creating a wide variety of novel genetic combinations in microorganisms it is also known as genetic engineering. 1977 *Times* 18 Apr. 48/2 They possess much smaller closed loops of DNA, called plasmids—which consist of only a few genes.

Harriet has just told me of your impending visit to Paris And for the grand occasion designed to celebrate the centenary the Pasteur Institute. We rather like the symbolism of having the Presidents inaugurate the proceedings: one the president merely of France but the other, the president of a sister research institute (and university). In the sociological mood of the French founding father Emile Durkheim, I applaud symbolic moments such as these. And we take unlimited pleasure in the thought that it was precisely Josh who was asked to speak as scientific correlate to the nation's president Mitterand.

And since I'll be Faxing these meandering notes to you I attach the notice of a rather less notable ceremonial moment only because Harriet has asked me to do so. She took notice and pleasure in the memory that, speaking ceremonially of the Institut Pasteur, let it be noted that I marched -- or was it strolled? alongside the stellar Francois Jacob in those Oxonian proceedings last year. An altogether impressive man.

Ramblingly but with constant love,

Bob